

1679  
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*Ananias and Saphira discover'd.* V 462

Or, The true intent of a

PAMPHLET  
CALLED  
*OMNIA COMESTA BELO:*  
IN A  
LETTER  
By way of  
ANSWER.

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LAMENT. iv. 16.

*The anger of the Lord has divided them, he will no  
more regard them? they respected not the persons  
of the Priests.*

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L O N D O N:

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SIR,



Have receiv'd so many Libels and other Pamphlets from you; that I am both asham'd of troubling you any farther, and weary of Reading so many words with so little sense or common honesty. But my great grief is to find it so much the humor to lessen the Credit and Reputation of Authority, and by weakning the Government, in alienating mens hearts from it; to cut the Grasse from underneath our own feet: and whilst the Enemy is pushing sore at us, our selves to shake, if not remove the Foundations whereon we stand. And in the midst of this wilful murder, no wound seems to me so envenom'd and mortal, as that which pierces the Soul and Conscience of the Nation, the bitter words wherewith the Church is daily slander'd. Is it a time to strive among our selves for Reformation, when Antichrist is at the Gates? Is it a time to divide and scatter, to pull and tear one another, just when the common Enemy is upon our backs? To mind our defence least, when he is most at leisure to Assault us? It must certainly be the Gall of bitterness, that shall disturb and distract us at this time.

Amongst other ungracious Libels against the Church, there is one called *Omnia Comesta à Bello*. The Author intended *Belo*: but hapned to be more right then he was aware of. For the late unhappy Times plainly shew what the issues of War are like to be. Then were the Rich and Wealthy the only marks of Violence and Oppression; none but the Profligate and those that delighted in troubl'd waters became Rich: then the worst of events besel us, if the Proverb says true; for Beggars were set on Thrones and mounted on Horsback, whilst Princes went on Foot. And if we consider the Original of this Book, it was first Printed at the beinning of the Rebellion, to Usher in the Covenant, and so accessary, as much as such a poor spiteful Pamphlet could be, to all the bloud-shed and wickedness that then follow'd. God be thanked the memory of those licentious days, when no man could say, ought was his, is by woful experience so fresh now upon the minds of thousands, that without most fatal Infatuation, it will be impossible to be deluded into the same snare again. And yet what endeavours there are to destroy us with the grievous wounds of Friends, and under pretence of Regulation overwhelm us once more with the same Confusion! What is Liberty, when the multitude is made judg of it, but an Inundation of Disorders, and letting the wildness of Corrupt Nature loose to all extravagance. And yet what courting  
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of the people at this day to take the matter into their own hands ! Though, God knows, it is not that these Incendiaries care for the people : but knowing that the reigns of Government must be placed in some hands, they hope by getting them loose, to catch hold of them themselves. And as this is evidently the course the Pope or Devil himself wou'd advise to destroy us by, Divisions : so I shall shew you in the conclusion that this is their advise, and that they do work together with the disturbers of our Peace, and principally with those that strike at our Church.

First, he charges the impoverishing the Nation, ruin of Trade, and general Consumption of Comfort, Setlement and Content, which, as he says, has brought the Nation to a mere Anatomy ; upon the Pride, Luxury and Oppression of the Prelates. To which may easily be answer'd. 1. That the first assertion is false. For never was there more money in the Nation, and if it be not so equally divided, the Gentry and Nobility living so much at *London*, are the great cause of it. As for Trade it never run so high as of late years, of which, experience is so evident a judg, that I can only wonder at the Confidence of the contrary declaration. But then where the Consumption of Comfort, &c. lyes, who can tell ? I am sure if a Prince detesting Bloud-shed and Oppression, and for fear of being hard upon his people, suffering his Prerogative to

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run lower than ever any Kings or Queens of *England* did before him, would be a Comfort, we have it in the highest degree. If the Clergy have contributed to this Consumption, let them shew the man, and he shall be punisht. But I see none but the envious, and them that are given to change, discontented: and how you will please them, I cannot tell. And I fear the Nation is rather like *Jeshurun*, than any of *Pharaohs* lean Kine, if we observe truly. Nay but the pride of the Prelates has done this thing, which indeed is not done. It must be a beggarly pride in many of them, if they are proud: and that can do mischief to none but to themselves. However I would have this Learned Author shew who they are. For general reflections are the most unjust, and by Consequence the most Unchristian proceeding in the World. The Innocent as well as Guilty are Condemn'd, and know not how to kelp themselves. But Luxury indeed is the wasting Vice, and I would it were not so much in fashion as it is. However there are not many Bishops that have wherewithal, and those few that have, are, I make no doubt, ready to give an account, to the shame of their Accusers. Where the Oppression lyes, that I am to seek: unless be such, to punish injustice as wrongful dealing. But of these particulars more hereafter.

2. in the next Query there is as much falshood and ignorance put together, as well could be comprehended

prehended in so few terms. He tells you that all the Reform'd Churches in *Europe* cast off Episcopacy with Popery, and why did not *England*? *England* did not do it, because it has been the Universal and constant Church-Government for the first fifteen hundred years, deriv'd from the Apostles by as Authentick Testimony as any part of our Religion. *England* did not do it, because it is an Order that stands most in the Popes light, and which therefore *Rome* has always oppos'd, most eminently in the Council of *Trent*, and most injuriously by exempt jurisdictions, whereby to have creatures more immediately depending upon *Rome*, the Government of the Church is broken, and its Antient Constitutions and Canons violated. And I wish this Rag of Popery were removed from us. But lastly, *England* did not do it, because many of the Reformed Churches did not do it, as *Sueden*, *Denmark*, the Protestant Church in *Poland*, the Protestant *Switzers*, the *Lutherans* in *Germany*, besides the *Greek Churches*, &c. many that did it, have acknowledg'd it to be out of pure necessity, and the learnedst men among them have ever approved Episcopal Government, and the best, if not absolutely necessary, when it could be had.

The third Query is, Why all this waste? Why not sold and given to the poor? The Bishops having 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. thousand pounds per ann. a man. Had he said 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. hundred pounds

a year, he had come nearer the truth. For so it is indeed with most of them : except some very few, the best of which come hardly up to four. But it is a *Judas Query*, and so I leave *St. John* to explain it.

4. The fourth is soon answer'd, Whether other Nations without Bishops have succeeded in any particular, better than *England* with Bishops : let the World judg. And had this Author been endow'd with as much knowledg and understanding, as he is with Malice and Covetousness, he would nver have put a question so disadvantageous for his purpose.

5. The fifth and last Query, is begging the Question upon a false supposition : as you will see by what follows.

Now his Queries are done, he comes to prove his Assertions : which he does by the same Arguments that will Establish Anarchy for a Law, and overthrow all Government.

He tells you the Bishops keep Chaplains : and I believe as eminent for Learning and Piety have come out of that Rank, as from any places whatever. But their several Officers keeping Courts, &c. What, would he have jurisdictions look after themselves ? or rather would he have the Clergy be left to the wide World without Laws and Authority to protect them. Had this Author as much concern for the next World, as he has for this, he would then think, that to honour God with our substance, and



to adorn his worship with a grateful share of what he has blest us with, might be of as much advantage to us, under the dispensation of Providence as other layings out; and that the Judges of the Land with the innumerable Officers and Dependences upon the Executive part of the Justice of this Nation, even to the Constables and Overseers of the Poor, might as well be reckoned a burden, because their Gains in a full Computation are ten times more than the Clergies; and yet I hope no man in his senses can think it possible for us to subsist without such a Constitution. If he will number Parishes, let him Compute what is gathered for the Poor in all the Parishes of *England*; and see what a prodigious sum is spent to maintain numbers in idleness. But he reckons and computes at so strange a rate, as if nothing were to be done to right the Church, as if its Officers were to live upon the Air, and that whatever were received, went into a great Gulf never to return by procuring the Necessaries of Nature, Meat, Drink, and Cloathing, by providing for their Families, and if they provide not for the Poor above any other sort of men, let others take their Office. Now if unreasonable and wilful men have suffered by Censures for resisting the Laws: why are not Thieves, Robbers and Murderers as well pittied for their losses. For where a Law may be obeyed with the same Liberty of Conscience, as for pretence it is broken,

that Offender is as unjustifiable as a Thief and a Robber. That this is the Case with all Dissenters is plain from the Statute, which allows Meetings to such a number. And yet how little disturbance do even the greatest Offenders in this kind meet with? But you say men are Prosecuted for three pences and six pences : more Knaves they, that will Cheat and put to trouble their Neighbours for so slight a sum, by with-holding anothers right.

The vast sums of money the Bishops, Deans, &c. heaped up at the Kings coming in, is a great Eyesore to him. And that the evil Eye of *Judas* may manifestly appear, he tells you a grievance. Those that bought Church-Lands are undone : if he durst, he would say Crown-Lands too. So here is the Case, Our Progenitors out of a just resentment of Religion, gave many Endowments to the Church for the more Comfortable and Honorable maintenance of those that Ministred in it, lest the Service of God should become vile in the Eyes of the people, if he should still be Worshipped in Dens and Caves, while the Professors of his Worship dwelt in stately Palaces and fared plentifully. It is a sign we will not acknowledg the hand that gave it, if we grudge a grateful return. But in comes an usurped power, by means of an execrable Rebellion, and divides the spoil of Church and Crown Lands, Gods and the Kings Inheritance : and when it pleases God to restore the right again, it must be Oppression to  
turn

turn these young *Ababs* out of their Sacrilegious and Traiterous Possessions. Neither was this envied sum, which the Church got, near of that value this Author would have it; and what Charges were upon it, let any judg, when they that came in, had for many years before been stript naked for their Loyalty, Cathedrals pulled down or let fall, Houses wasted and ruined, Dilapidations to a prodigious Charge: and yet if the Government had taken a more narrow inspection, perchance it might have been better. Still *Judas* proceeds, why all this cost? What have we for it? You have a splendid Church suitable to the prosperity God has blessed us with, the wonder and rejoycing of all our Friends abroad, and the envy of *Rome* and its adherents, and such as work under a Cloak for Popery here at home. You have a Learned, Orthodox and a Godly Clergy, such as are not afraid to speak with their Enemy in the Gate, but challenge either single or in a body the whole Herd of Sectary-Ministers, to see if they can answer them one word of a thousand. If they have colour of truth, why do they not desire a free Synod? Why do they not seek Conferences? If they are so Sober, why do they go Drunk home ten or twenty Teachers of them every Sunday night, after they have ended their Conventicles? I hear no such thing of the Conforming Clergy: and if they know any such, let them prove it, and he shall be cast out. But we can prove this of

a greater number of theirs, than has yet been named, even within the Walls of *London*, and make it appear, that part of their Congregations know of it.

But I am sick of this stuff, full of nothing besides railing false suggestions and upholding stubbornness and disobedience: so that I am resolved no longer to answer a Fool according to his folly, lest I should become such another. Only this let me say, that all he urges, were it as true as it is false, amounts to no more, than what the several Authorities, he quotes at the end, do amount unto, which is, That the prosperity of this World is a great snare, and that the Church as well as other Bodies, is liable to abuse it. And therefore great care ought to be taken, to reform and moderate the manners of such as are intrusted with the Wealth or Power of the Church. And in Gods name, let the strictest scrutiny be made to heal the broken, and purge out the corrupt. But to cut off the thing abused with him that does abuse it, the Office with him that is entrusted with it, is neither Sober, Just nor Rational. And whenever it was so done, you will find it in all Ages to have been done, in a tumultuous and rash way, and by such disorders as have cut off the Just with the Unjust, when it has succeeded well to none but the violent. So that for the sins of the people such things may come to pass: but I beseech you never let it be imposed upon us, as a prudent or justifiable proceeding.

*Ananias and Saphira* were ten times juster, than this man of *Belus*. For they only kept back part of what they had not yet parted with. Whereas this Gentleman would take away, not of his one gift, but what our Ancestors either found already bestowed, or themselves of pious intention gave to the honour of God and his worship.

But to conclude that you may be truly convinced out of whose Quiver this Arrow comes, take the Deposition and Evidence of *Dr. Oates* in his true Narrative of the Horrid Plot, where you will find the Papist to be the manager of all this Controversie. And indeed what party else can benefit by it? For when the Clergy are brought low and despicable, distracted with Sects and Heresies, Scattered, Rent, and Divided: What mischiefs are they not exposed to? Can the Pope and all his Conclave direct us an easier way to fool our selves into their hands? The words of the Doctor are these. *Art. 1. Richard Strange Provincial, John Keins, Basil Langworth, John Fenwick, and Mr. Harcourt Jesuits, did write a Treasonable Letter to one Father Suiman, an Irish Jesuit, at Madrid, in the Kingdom of Spain, in which was contained their plotting and contriving a Rebellion in Scotland of the Presbyterians against the Episcopal Government. In order to which they had employed one Matthew Wright and William Morgan, and one Ireland, to go and Preach under the notion of Presbyterians, and give the disaffected Scots a*  
*true*

*true understanding of their sad state and condition, in which they were, by reason of the Episcopal Tyranny exercised over them; and withal to tell them, they had now a fair opportunity to vindicate their Liberty and Religion; and that it could be done by no other way, but by the Sword.* Art. 2. *Other Letters from the Jesuits to Father Leshee the French Kings Confessor, in which they told him, that they had stirred up the Presbyterians in Scotland to a Rebellion, and that twenty thousand would be in Arms, if His Majesty of France would break with the King of England.* Art. 22. *A Letter for Whitebread Provincial, Father Mico, &c. That they had received Letters from Scotland, in which they were informed that the people would rise to oppose Duke Lauderdale and the Royal Party, and also that they would endeavor by themselves, their Agents and their Purse to provoke the Scots against the English.* Art. 25. *Their designs, the Jesuites say in another Letter, went on well in Scotland.* Art. 35. *Upon a Conference of the Jesuits, by order of the Provincial, they are to send new Messengers into Scotland, to promote the Commotions there, and inform the people of the great Tyranny they lay under by reason of their being denied Liberty of Conscience, and that not being to be procured but by the Sword, they must take that course to purchase their Liberty. By which means, said the Fathers so assembled, we shall weaken both the Presbyterian and Episcopal Faction.* Art. 43. *That two new Messengers were sent into Scotland, one by the name of Father Moor, and the other Father Saunders*

alias Brown, with instructions to carry themselves like Nonconformist Ministers, and to Preach to the disaffected Scots the necessity of taking up the Sword for the defence of Liberty of Conscience. These the Deponent saw dispatched, and ordered to go by Father Harcourt, in the name of Thomas White Provincial. Art. 50. They renew their hopes of success in Scotland upon assurance of the Papists there, that they would keep up the Commotions to their utmost. Art. 51. They own that the Provincial had taken great care to keep alive the difference betwixt the disaffected Scots and Duke Lauderdale, &c. and likewise to beget a difference betwixt the Dutch and the Prince of Orange. Art. 54. That one Matthew Metbourn, Mr. Penny, Mr. Mannock, &c. meeting upon Thursday and Sunday nights at a Club, are employed by the Jesuits to vilifie the House of Commons, and go about the City of London to incense the people against them and against the Bishops of the Nation. Art. 55. Mr. Jennison boasted, that he had put several out of love with the Kings interest, and would so continue. Art. 73. The Fathers in Scotland write, that their party was ready to joyn with the disaffected Scots : and that one Westby was destroyed by one that was servant to Lovel the Jesuit, for endeavouring to detect the Rebellion, with its Authors and Contrivers to the Council in Scotland. Pag. 64. §. 6. They would weaken and divide the Kingdoms by Civil Wars and Rebellions, as in the late Kings time. Pag. 67. §. 1. They would charge the King with Tyranny and designs of Oppressing, governing  
by



by the Sword and without Parliaments. §. 4. They would misreport and raise false News of the Kings affairs. §. 6. They would disturb Trade. §. 7. They would disaffect the Kings Subjects by Seditious Preachers set up, sent out, maintained and directed what to Preach in their own or other private or publick Conventicles and Field Meetings. And now see whether the Church of England or others work most for the Popish Interest. You shall know them by their Fruit.

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FINIS.

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